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ROTUNDA

Fall 1972
Volume 5, Number 4

JAPANESE GHOSTS
NGORONGORO
IN SEARCH OF TZIBANCHE

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ROTUNDA

the bulletin of The Royal Ontario Museum
Volume 5, Number 4, Fall 1972

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The cover: detail of colour woodcut by Kuniyoshi. See story on page 22.

Spotlight with the Editor

Past, present and future at the ROM

A NEW GARDEN

The garden that lies to the north of the Armour Court has been transformed. Changed, too, is the name. It is now the Ming Tomb Courtyard.

The concept is oriental—gentle and informal and making use of natural materials such as slabs of rock and crushed stone for the walkways. It reflects the oriental attitude that puts nature on an equal plane with man and, of course, complements the large Ming artifacts that already were in the area.

The garden was designed by van der Meulen Lohar and Associates. Its paths meander through newly planted trees opening onto unexpected vistas of the Ming objects or groups of rocks.

Beyond the courtyard, towards Bloor Street, is a cool expanse of grass shaded by tall trees. It is anticipated that on this ground will be built the new wing of the Museum. Thus the newly constructed area will become a true interior courtyard which serves as an open gallery for large Chinese artifacts.

EXPERIENCE FOR CHILDREN

For about 1600 children this was the summer when the Museum became much more meaningful to them as they participated in a five-day-a-week programme called "Experience for Children."

Based on an idea by 16-year-old Janet Ellard who got Nancy Hudson, 17, to help organize it, the programme was funded by a grant by Opportunities for Youth. Also recruited were Beth Brewer, Karen Ryan, Rob Brodie and Peter Rowland. Each day an average of 40 children toured the Museum, made handicrafts, held quizzes and games, and painted. One boy, for instance, did a 10-foot painting of one of the Museum's massive totems.

The final event of the programme was a costume party attended by about 70 children. At least that was so for the children. For the organizers the final event was cleaning up Room 4, headquarters for the Programme.

SMC REUNION

The Saturday Morning Club was conceived in 1938. Since then thousands of children have attended the weekly classes. Many later sent their own children.

Now, in the Museum's Jubilee Year there is

to be a reunion of all former staff and members of the Club.

The date is November 6; the time 5-10:30 p.m.; and the place, of course, the Museum. There'll be movies, pottery making, mural painting, folk singing and dancing, origami. There will also be a retrospective showing of children's work from 1938-1972. But perhaps the greatest appeal will be meeting old friends and colleagues. All members are invited, but if you are under 14 please bring an adult, and by all means come in costume.

ROM PEOPLE

Honours fell to a number of ROM staff in recent months. Among them:

Chief Biologist, Dr. Loris S. Russell was elected to a four-year term as President of the International Palaeontological Association. Dr. R. L. Peterson, curator of Mammalogy, became ROM's representative in the prestigious Association of Systematics Collections. Programme Secretary Helen Downie, Museology and film consultant Ella Martin, and Chief Archaeologist Dr. A. D. Tushingham were appointed Fellows of the Canadian Museums Association.

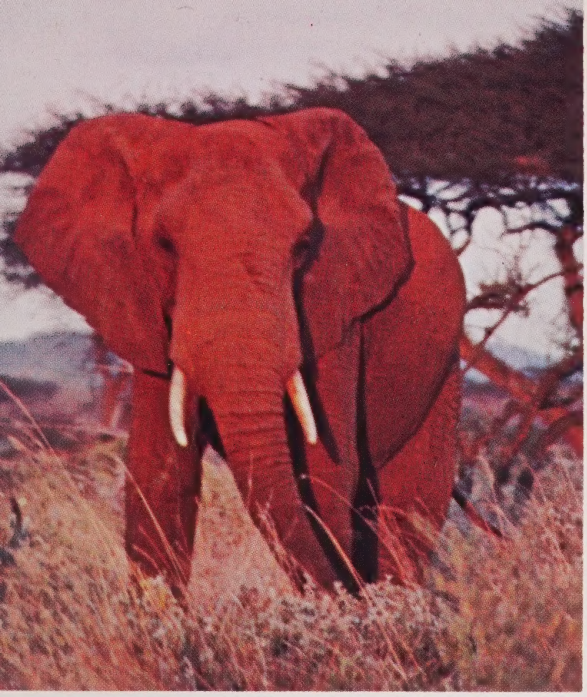
Large bronze bell newly displayed in the garden courtyard of the ROM.

Children hard at work and play in ROM*'s summer programme.*

Black rhinoceros.

Mature bull elephant

A froth of white pelicans on the shore of Lake Nakuru



NGORONGORO:
a cauldron full of living things

by T.M. Shortt,
Chief, Display Biology

A turbid, almost viscous, dove-grey mist, which is really cloud, rises, dips, rolls upon itself like the smoke of a prairie fire; beads of moisture decorate every blade of long grass and the twigs of shrubby bushes. It is bleak, raw, shivering cold although the equator lies only 3°11′ to the north. This is early morning on the rim of the caldera (Spanish: literally a cauldron) of Ngorongoro, one of the chain of seven volcanoes associated with the Gregory Rift in northern Tanzania.

Ngorongoro's crater (120 square miles) is sometimes publicized as the world's largest but this is not the case. The greatest in area is that of Kucharo in Japan. Three other Japanese craters and one in the Philippines exceed Ngorongoro in size. Even so, its vastness and the unbroken symmetry of its rim merit recognition as a geological wonderwork. Its greatest importance, however, lies not in its geological but in its biological significance, for on the crater floor 2000 to 2500 feet below the rim are vast areas of grassy plain, a chain of lakes and two forests . . . . and more than 20,000 large mammals. From the cloudy rim, 8,000 feet above sea level, the Land Rover begins to descend the extremely steep and narrow one-lane track that winds like a serpent down the crater wall to the floor. There is no guardrail and many unprotected, sheer inclines plunge hundreds of feet to jagged, tumbled rock. In a few minutes the pall of cloud is left behind and below, like peppercorns spilled on a straw-coloured rug, the herds of herbivores can be seen. The dark

Dog-size Thompson's Gazelle on the alert

Zebras and wildebeest on the plain of Ngorongoro

ones are wildebeest, the others dimly seen and alternately dissolving from view and reappearing again are zebra.

The approach to the depths is one admirably designed to tease the naturalist. He can see all that wonderful wildlife away down there below him, yet he must proceed with maddening slowness and caution. But at last the vehicle reaches level ground. It is warmer here but not hot for the altitude is still over 6000 feet. There is a huge circle of blue sky overhead but the top of the slaty blue surrounding wall is still swathed in cloud. One is in the centre of a gigantic halo.

Now the animals capture the attention. First, perhaps, will be a small group of "tommies," Thompson's gazelles, their silly little tails never still, wagging, swinging and spiralling—the never failing field mark, even in dim light when size and colour become vague, of the "mutt-dog"-sized antelope. No other so continuously and vigorously gyrates its caudal appendage.

But here are the wildebeest (or whitebearded gnu), perhaps 500 in this grazing herd. They are handsomer then those of their kind to be seen elsewhere—at Amboseli, Tsavo or Nairobi. They seem darker and richer grey, their foreparts tinged with bluish-, the flanks with pinkish-buff and they are more boldly tiger-striped down from the withers and on the neck. Their beards and the plumes of their horse-like tails are longer. Many consider the wildebeest ugly animals (admittedly they are improbable

looking creatures) but those people surely never saw them in the wild and in motion. They are the material expression of grace. Their size and bearing is that of thoroughbreds. In fact no racehorse ever could perform the elegant, pirouetting ballet steps of a group of skittishly curvetting wildebeest. Their numbers, something on the order of 12,000 head, account for about one half of the total of herbivores in the crater. Seldom in the grass country are wildebeest out of sight, grazing like the cattle herds of Alberta or Texas. Most photographs of other animals will reveal, when developed, wildebeest in the background.

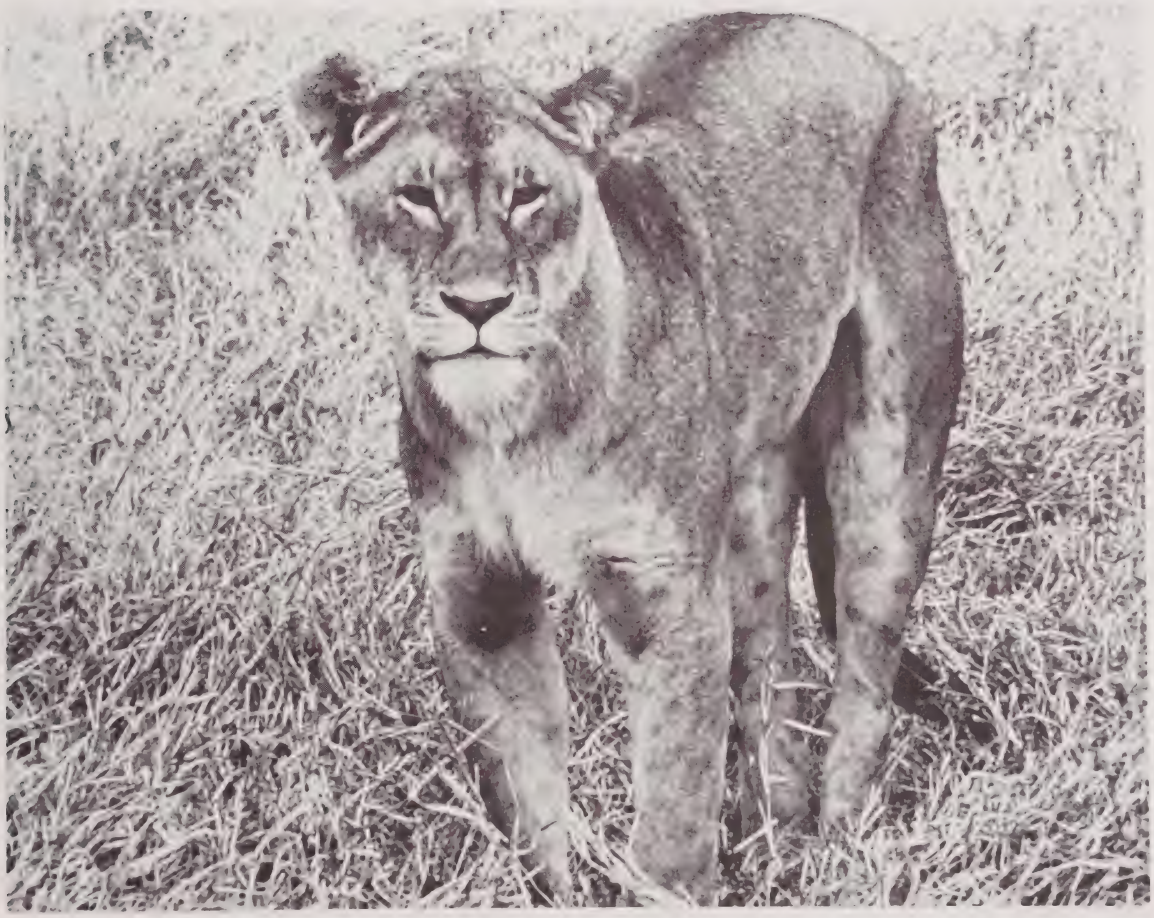
Intermingled with the wildebeest are groups of Burchell's zebra. They accept each other within the herd. There would appear to be no competition. The zebras suggest big, large-headed burros in masquerade attire. They are slow-moving and seem a bit dim-witted until startled—then they truly become galloping horses. A never ending source of amazement is how quickly, with distance, the garishly marked zebras fade into vague images, then disappear completely. Their black and white stripes merge into a grey that is tonally that of the grassy background. The dark wildebeest are obvious long after zebras have faded from view. There are roughly 5000 zebra in the crater.

Between them wildebeest and zebra account for about three-quarters of Ngorongoro's grazers. The final fourth is made up largely of two species of smaller antelopes, the little "tommies" already mentioned and the con-

From the rim of the crater, Lerai Forest and Lake Makat

Zebras fording a stream

Magnificent lioness out-stares the photographer



Black-maned lion in the caldera of Ngorongoro biting affectionately at the ear of one of his lionesses

siderably larger and paler Grant's gazelle, but there are lesser numbers of kongoni and the huge eland as well as black rhinoceros and ostrich.

Such a concentration of vegetarians naturally has its attendant predatory animals, cheetah, serval, hyaenas, hunting dog and leopard and the most magnificent lions in all Africa. An abundance of jackals and vultures serves to keep the "floor" neat and clean.

It is frequently said that wild lions do not possess full luxuriant manes owing to the hair being pulled out and thinned by passage through thorn bushes. This is likely true of many parts of Africa but not so on Ngorongoro's almost shrub-free grassy plains. No zoo animal that I have ever seen carried a mane as huge and dark as those of several of the big lions of the crater. Ngorongoro's lions lead an idyllic existence in a warm but unoppressive climate and with an abundance of fresh meat on the hoof within easy reach. Since the crater and its surrounds are a conservation area, they have nothing to fear; nothing, that is, until the onslaught of the "little critters" which anywhere in the world are the most threatening and dangerous to both man and beast. The pest in Ngorongoro is a blood-sucking fly that looks like a small house fly and is known as *Stomoxys*. The crater suffers periodic infestations and on rare occasions their horrendous numbers kill many animals through blood loss and exhaustion. Hocking, an English entomologist, described one outbreak as ". . . not dissimilar to that experienced in northern Canada with the blackfly . . ." One exceptional plague about ten years ago reduced the lion population of the crater by about 90%. Some died and some apparently climbed the crater walls to escape and get relief. Fortunately lion numbers had been restored to normal by 1966.

The Lerai forest, the larger of the two within the caldera, is the feeding grounds and home of elephant, olive baboon, leopard, waterbuck, monkeys and many species of birds. It is a particularly beautiful forest with many fine stands of yellow-barked acacias or "fever trees." The bird enthusiast will head first to the lakes which are alkaline. The avifauna of the shores of Lake Makat, the largest, verges on the incredible. There are scores of white pelicans, greater and lesser flamingo, Egyptian and

spur-winged geese, yellow-billed, maribou, Abdim's and saddle-billed storks, cormorants, sacred ibises and African spoonbills, to name only a few, all seen along a foreshore frothy with foam and flamingo feathers.

As a result of the unbroken vistas and almost even distribution of the animals over the grassy plains the illusion of even greater numbers of creatures is inevitable. Almost all of the early estimates of their abundance are much too high (there was of course some wilful exaggeration involved, as for example the ". . over a half-million . ." by one observer). Even competent and reliable naturalists such as Dugmore (75,000) and Barns (50,000 wildebeest) were misled. While there is a year-to-year variation in the number of grazing animals within the crater, commonsense dictates that something on the order of 20,000 head is near the optimum population for the acreage to support. This allows about 6 acres for each large grazer, a ratio compatible with the best pasturing of cattle and taking into consideration the somewhat different composition of the biomass (units of weight rather than individuals). The density in Ngorongoro, then, is near maximum and, controlled by an equally well-balanced number of predatory animals, is close to being ideal.

So there are no "half million" large mammals in Ngorongoro—just 20,000. Even so, strew 20,000 peppercorns on *your* rug (nine pounds worth)—that's a lot of peppercorns!

Among the great game-rich parks and reserves of Africa Ngorongoro stands out spectacularly. Here the disappointment of failing to find game is non-existent. But a word of warning—don't forget to take warm clothing for nighttime on that cold, cloudy rim, for that is where the human accommodation is.

Lerai Forest from the rim

Terence Michael Shortt, Chief of Display Biology since 1948, has been on more than two dozen collecting expeditions during his Museum career—on one of which (in the American Southwest) he met the friendly beast shown here. Mr. Shortt has been widely published as an author, co-author and illustrator. His skill with the camera is evident in the photographs accompanying this article.

IN SEARCH OF TZIBANCHE

by Dr. Peter D. Harrison,
Research Associate,
Office of the Chief Archaeologist

Detail of hieroglyphic carving in the ancient beams of the lintel. Relief of the carving is emphasized by cross-lighting at night

Spanish chroniclers of the Conquest of Mexico in the early 16th century reported that the southern portion of Quintana Roo Territory was inhabited by a relatively sparse population of Maya. This period of contact with Europeans falls in the archaeological classification of the late Post Classic Period (*c.* A.D. 1200-1550) as far as the culture of the Maya is concerned. Classic behaviour had long since fallen by the wayside, and the Maya had become militaristically oriented. It is known that in the north of the peninsula, rivalries for power were breaking down the former cultural unity.

Into this scene arrived the Spanish. Accounts of the *entradas* of Alfonso Davila in 1531-33 and Melchor Pacheco in 1544-45 tell that during this contact period, the south of what is now Quintana Roo was organized into political "provinces," each ruled by a chieftainship. In the southern half of Quintana Roo, these provinces included Cochuah in the northern portion, Uaymil in the centre, and Chetumal in the south. These names come to us by way of the chroniclers and, although they are of Maya origin, have undoubtedly been hispanicized.

Well-preserved interior of the rear room of Temple VI. *The cross-beams at upper centre are original, dating to the building's construction. The dark edge of the lintel beam (lower right) spans a doorway in the west wall*

The Yucatan Peninsula. Shaded area indicates survey's concession

THE YUCATAN PENINSULA

The Spanish were travelling by horse and foot across a vast terrain where the communication network consisted mainly of a series of footpaths, many of them barely visible to the untrained eye. The concept of the frontiers of these "provinces" was therefore very vague and ill-defined, as was understanding of the political organization within them. The encounters between the Spanish and the Maya were often fierce and desperate, with the upper hand vacillating first to one side and then to the other. Conquest of the region was uneasily completed in 1545.

According to our rough understanding of the locations of the ancient frontiers, the Concession which our project received from the Mexican government for survey purposes included the southern end of the province of Cochuah, all of the province of Uaymil, and most of the province of Chetumal. Since Uaymil was the only province which was encompassed entirely, we adopted the project title *Uaymil Survey Project*/ROM.

Uaymil Survey Project/ROM was launched in the winter of this year. Generously financed by grants from the Canada Council for operating expenses, and from the Ivey Foundation for capital equipment, the purpose of the first season was to conduct a site survey in the south and western portion of the Territory of Quintana Roo. This corner of the Maya area had never been systematically explored and hence the nature, size, date and number of sites which it might contain were almost unknown. Several forays into the interior during the first half of this century had yielded some hints that a few Maya sites of the Classic Period (*c.* A.D. 300-900) did indeed exist in the region. A survey was bound to produce interesting information about settlement in prehistoric times. Secondly, the Museum needed information about site content in order to select

one (or several) sites(s) for a full-scale project of excavation.

The descriptions of the Conquest period indicated that a fair-sized population had occupied the northern and eastern portions of our concession. As a result, we naturally expected to find a number of sites dating to this period. We did not, however, turn up very many sites of this late date. Nearly all sites were much earlier.

Clues to locations of sites dating to the earlier Classic period were scant. In the interior, some survey work had been realized by Mexican archaeologists, notably Lizardi-Ramos. Recent work conducted by the Tulane-*National Geographic* expedition to Becan in Campeche included some exploration in the extreme southwest of Quintana Roo, but we considered this territory to be outside our Concession. Within our Concession, the only reconnaisance originating from outside of Mexico in recent times was performed by the intrepid and colourful Englishman, Thomas Gann. In the early decades of this century, Gann excavated and explored quite extensively in British Honduras and the Yucatan Peninsula. During forays in the northern end of British Honduras, Gann occasionally crossed the border into Quintana Roo. In this way he came to be the discoverer of one of the most important sites in the southern portion of Quintana Roo, namely Tzibanche.

Gann was one of the last investigators for whom field work meant jungle exploration and rather unsystematic excavation in the search for artifacts. His particular taste for glamour makes his accounts read like adventurous romances. Nevertheless, he must be credited with the first discovery of the site of Tzibanche. According to his own account, he reached the site by travelling a distance of about 30 miles in a "general N.W. direction from Sac Xan . . ." a village on the Rio Hondo, which forms the border between Quintana Roo and British Honduras. Gann's descriptions and photographs of Tzibanche depict a large and impressive site with several well-preserved temple structures, one of which contained a wooden lintel with a carved hieroglyphic inscription. Gann made three trips to the site, or rather to its vicinity, since his second and third trips concentrated on separate but nearby sites.

Living quarters and pig pens belonging to the pig farm overlooking a branch of X'Can Rio. This location is likely to become the site of the project camp. Although most of the present structures would be removed, camp quarters will be constructed in the same style of native tropical architecture

Although his guides were always able to lead him back to Tzibanche, he was not able to describe exactly where it was located, so, despite his publication of his finds, the site became "lost" again.

Tzibanche was an obvious target for our survey, as one site of importance that should be re-located, particularly because the descriptions indicated a Classic Period date, perhaps one of very few sites belonging to this period in the Concession. A rough location of the site is indicated in an archaeological atlas published in Mexico, its position inferred from the general directions provided by Gann. However, nobody currently living in the area had ever heard of a group of ruins by this name. The word "Tzibanche" translates roughly into "writing in wood," referring to the carved lintel. Gann created the name and it does not occur in local usage.

Today, the southern boundary of our Concession is marked by a recently completed super-highway traversing Quintana Roo from east to west. Another highway of somewhat older vintage runs north from the capital city of Chetumal through the eastern portion of the Concession. Connecting with these two main arteries are innumerable small dirt roads that penetrate in a zig-zag fashion into the interior bush. Only a large eight-wheeled mechanical monster can pass them during the rainy season which usually falls in the period between June and December. When the rains have stopped and the sun has had time to dry them, these roads provide a considerable degree to access

A branch of X'Can Rio as it appears immediately below the pig farm. Shown here at low water at the end of the dry season, the level rises markedly during the rainy season. As a reliable source of flowing water, this river must have been one of the attractions which brought a large settlement to its banks in ancient times

into the ancient provinces of Uaymil and Chetumal.

The initial stages of our survey involved a road reconnaisance to whatever parts could be reached during the end of a later-than-usual wet season. This reconnaisance showed us that the area was divided geographically into sub-regions which we came to call the "Hills Region," the "Lakes Region," and the "Interior." The Hills Region lies in the south, crosses the east-west highway, and extends for a distance still unknown to the north of the highway. The Lakes Region lies in the east on a roughly north-south axis parallel to the coast. Although the Lakes Region extends quite far north in the Concession, it is separated from the Hills Region by a large area of low ground called *bajo,* distinguished by a particular kind of scrub growth, clayey soil, and a general bogginess during the rainy season. In the course of the survey, both the Hills and Lakes Regions were ultimately revealed to contain a great number of sites. The separation of two sub-regions by the great *bajo* will undoubtedly prove to be an important ecological factor in the ultimate analysis of ancient settlement pattern in southern Quintana Roo.

Gann's descriptions of Tzibanche suggested that the site lay somewhere in the Hills Region, west of the great *bajo.* In the early stages of the survey we had the good fortune to do a little aerial reconnaisance from an elevation of approximately 1500 feet, through the graces of Captain Hal Ball of Florida. The flight created an overwhelming feeling of intimidation at the sheer size of the area available for survey. Later we discovered that the density of sites in this area was so high that we were not able to completely investigate the whole Concession in a single season. However, the view from the air confirmed the division of the greater region into its geographical sub-parts. Due to the dense and relatively undifferentiated growth over the whole area the only sites that could be distinguished from the air were those whose

The tall nut-bearing ramon (Brosimum alicestrum) *trees also serve as a good vantage point for our guide searching for one of the large structures at Tzibanche*

locations were already known. We made our first search for Tzibanche on this flight, and saw nothing. Ironically enough, it turned out later that we had flown almost directly over the site.

Generally, our approach for the location of sites was through the use of informants. We would make contacts in a village, seek out those individuals who knew the locations of ruins and engage them to guide us to the spot. Each time a new site was reached, we stopped to map it and make test excavations for associated ceramics. The first sites were quite small, comprised of a single *plaza* with two or three buildings around it, the latter visible only as mounds. Upon occasion the entire site would consist of a single moderate-sized mound perhaps three to six metres high, surrounded by a few smaller mounds, randomly placed.

At this time we were working in the southern Hills Region and always asking the same question: "Have you ever heard of a site called Tzibanche? It has large structures with preserved rooms." Eventually we encountered ininformants who reported that there was such a site to the north of the highway and west of the vicinity where we were working. This site was located near a small community called Central Flores and was referred to by the same name. It was still inaccessible because of the wet condition of the entry road. A little later we heard of another site in the same general vicinity, this time called Morocoy and also inaccessible for the same reason.

Finally the roads were dry enough to permit a visit to the site which had variously been called Central Flores and Morocoy. Arrangements were made with the man who owned a land concession on which the reputed ruins lay. This gentleman, a rancher by profession, agreed to take us himself to see "his" ruins, which he had been protecting for years from the inroads of looters, since he felt that one day someone would recognize their importance. The road twisted north from the highway for 24 kilometres, crossing branches of the geat *bajo* en route. This road ended on high ground at the banks of a body of water called X'can Rio (Yellow River), one of the unmapped water courses in the region. At this spot our host and guide had located a pig farm, making use of the water to raise his herd. One of the thatched buildings of the pig farm was built at the foot of the remains of a large structure which had been constructed at the edge of the water in ancient times. We were informed that the "real" ruins lay one kilometre to the north at a still higher elevation.

We started walking through upland vegetation in which the trees were taller and the ground growth more open than we had seen before. Soon we were among ruins of modest size, small mounds long fallen into decay, but undisturbed. After a few more minutes walk through continuous groups of such mounds we arrived at the foot of the first large structure. From the ground level the height of the building was impossible to judge as it disappeared

above the tree tops. A steep climb brought our party to the top, and we knew at once that we had found Tzibanche. The style of architecture and configuration of the partly preserved room matched exactly one of Gann's photographs.

Turning to our guide, I asked him if there was not a structure here that contained a wooden lintel, not expecting for a minute that it would have survived the ravages of looters over the 40 years since Gann's last visit. The rancher was properly astounded and wondered how I knew. "The lintel," he said, "is over there," indicating another structure rising above the trees at about 200 metres distance. There was the lintel still intact, exactly the way Gann had photographed it. To view its carving on the underface, one had to lie supine in the tick-infested leaf mould separated from the inscription by no more than a metre. Despite the discomfort, few occasions in the daily routine of the modern archaeologist are as satisfying as was that moment.

From the top of the temple of the lintel another structure was visible to the north of Tzibanche at a distance of about three kilometres. This was clearly too far away to be part of the same site and it was some weeks later before we were able to visit this distant mound. Because of the nature of the surrounding terrain, high ground surrounded by *bajo*, the structure rises like a giant ziggurat. It was indeed a separate site and important in its relationship with Tzibanche due to the radical differences in architectural style between the two relatively close sites.

The rear wall of one of the structures rises sharply above the tree-tops in a state of good preservation. Named "Temple VI" *by Thomas Gann, this structure is among the largest at Tzibanche and contains the carved wooden lintels. This photograph is taken from a point three-quarters of the way up the slope of the high platform on which the structure rests*

Detail of the rear wall of "Temple VI." *Patches of the original plaster finish are visible*

Viewed at a distance of three kilometres, this large structure looms like a ziggurat on the horizon. It belongs to a separate site lying to the north. Note the apparent density of the forest when viewed from above

Tzibanche is important for several reasons. The architectural preservation will allow a definition of the styles of the region. Part of the significance of the site lies in the distinctive style of the architecture when compared with other sites both in the immediate region and elsewhere in the Maya area. Further, the site has structures of such size, up to 29 metres high (*c.* 90 feet), that obviously it once served as a ceremonial centre of some distinction. While not on the scale of the Maya super-sites such as Tikal in Guatemal and Coba in northern Quintana Roo, it nevertheless must have exerted considerable influence in the southern half of the present Territory.

Perhaps the most challenging problem, however, is the apparent cultural period to which the site belongs. From architecture and associated ceramics, the indications are that Tzibanche survived no later than the beginning of the late portion of the Classic Period (i.e. *c.* A.D. 600 in other parts of the Maya area). There is no evidence from our preliminary probes to indicate that occupation of the site continued through the duration of the Late Classic Period. This would be a most unusual situation for any Maya site. Of course, based on the small evidence on hand from the survey, our inferences may be misleading.

Excavation on a larger scale than we were able to perform with our small test pits is required in order to determine if most of the Late Classic Period is truly absent at the site. If this should prove to be the case, then very extensive excavation is in order to seek the reasons why this strangely early abandonment occured at Tzibanche. One could speculate that the ecological balance may have given out at an earlier date in this particular region than it did in other parts of the Maya area. The populace may have been forced to move physically to a better ecological zone, or if they remained, been forced to abandon their efforts in constructing monumental architecture. The answers to such questions will become the object of a continuing search at Tzibanche in future years.

The vault of this room can be seen in cross-section, due to partial collapse of the building. The room itself is filled with debris upon which our guide is standing

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Peter D. Harrison was born in Toronto, Ontario in 1937. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Toronto and completed his Ph.D. in Anthropology in 1970 at the University of Pennsylvania. For Dr. Harrison, archaeological field work began in 1957 with the Royal Ontario Museum. Subsequent field seasons in Canada ranged from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. He spent three years with the University Museum of Philadelphia participating in the major project at Tikal in Guatemala. He is an Associate Professor at Trent University in Peterborough and joined the ROM staff by cross-appointment as a Research Associate in 1971. Always assisted in the field by his wife, Alexandra, he is currently Director of the ROM's Uaymil Survey Project in Quintana Roo, Mexico.

YOKAIDAN

Ghost tales of old Japan

by David Pepper

Display General

The young traveller stopped when he heard the sound of weeping. In the darkness he could barely distinguish the shape of a woman crying into her long kimono sleeve. "What is wrong?" No answer. He put a hand lightly upon her shoulder and said again, "What is the matter? Am I able to help you?" The woman shook her head slowly, then raised her face to him. It was blank—completely devoid of all human features. He screamed in terror and ran off down the road. After what seemed an eternity he saw far ahead a paper lantern glowing feebly. As he drew near, he recognized with great relief the portable stall of an aged seller of boiled noodles. The old man greeted him. "Good evening—you look as if you've seen a ghost!" "No, not a ghost," replied the traveller, still gasping for breath. "It was a woman. But her face . . . . . It was horrible! . . . . . It was like . . . ." The old man nodded and smiled. "Was it like . . . THIS?" He passed his hand over his face, which became as pale and smooth and featureless as the surface of an egg. And then the lantern was extinguished.

Matsue Castle.

Woodcuts, sketches and paintings from the Royal Ontario Museum collections. Photographs by the author.

A brave young mother of the samurai class protects her son from a menacing phantom. The ghost is dressed in the robes of a yama-bushi, or warrior-monk.

Colour woodcut from the series Kenjo Reppuden (Lives of Wise Women and Valiant Wives) by Ichiyūsai Kuniyoshi, c. 1842.

When the summer's heat bears fully down upon the Japanese islands with its humid, intolerable days and its nights oppressively thick and heavy, then the season of ghosts truly begins. In the evenings families gather on verandahs or in rooms opened to the night air, to hear retold the *kaidan,* tales of the uncanny from Japan's richly haunted past.

With the coming of the period of great heat, books, magazines, radio and television, films and theatrical performances burst forth in a seemingly inexhaustible abundance of weird stories. This no doubt is somewhat influenced by the nationwide ceremonies of O-Bon, the Buddhist festival of the dead, in mid-July when it is believed the spirits of departed relatives return from the Meidō, the world beyond that of the living, to visit their families and loved ones. Yet these gentle and invisible spirits are at peace, and seldom enter into the ghost-lore recounted at evening gatherings.

Perhaps it is the pleasurable effect of these stories which makes them so popular during the muggy summer nights, for their very nature is to set the nerves to tingling, the flesh to rise in bumps, and shivers of delicious fear to course along the spine, making the stickiness of the surrounding heat seem as distant as another world. In former times it was the custom to hold a seance of sorts—a group of people would seat themselves in a room, surrounded by a circle of one hundred lighted lamps, and take turns reciting stories from the Hyaku Monogatari (The Hundred Tales, a classic of ghost-lore). With the completion of each eerie tale, one of the lamps would be blown out, until the room was in utter darkness.

A brave warrior is beset by ghosts—even the snow-clad pines on the folding screen in the background assume the shape of skulls, while before him, barely discernible, kneels the outline of a human figure. An impossibly thin arm issues from his own clothing as its tiny hand caresses his face.

Colour woodcut, signed Ichiyūsai Kuniyoshi, c. 1840.

Some of the old stories are purely fantasy, others are based upon actual events, but all have that uncanny quality which causes the hair to bristle and the senses to become acutely aware of even the slightest alien sound or movement.

For Japan is one of the most ghost-ridden countries in the world. Few except perhaps the ancient kingdoms of Britain and Ireland can match this occult other-world of Japan, whose catalogue of the strange and supernormal is as infinite in form and variety as the leaves of a great forest.

Besides all manner of beasts mythical and semi-mythical, there exist in this realm of twilight demons, ghouls, witches, wizards, goblins and elemental spirits. These latter can inhabit living or inanimate matter, as for example rocks, trees or water. The Sesshō-Seki or killing stone may still be seen. It is associated with a monster legend, and in fact mysteriously kills many birds and small creatures who stray too near. Drooping willow trees in particular are said to harbour a form of spirit, as does the Enoki tree. Both should be avoided by night for fear of meeting these *ki-no-obake* which issue from the trunk and float beneath the branches.

Obake or *bakemono* is a generic term for all spirits, most particularly non-human ones. Very old camellia trees are sometimes *obake* and can walk about at night. When cut down, they moan and bleed.

Many kinds of ghostly lights and fires appear, usually at the scene of a great tragedy where they float in the air or drift over water. *In-kwa* or *oni-bi* (demon fires) they are called, and woe betide the night-bound traveller who is led astray by their palely shimmering glow.

The *te-no-me*, a thin eyeless man, gropes through the long grasses at the time of the full moon, his arms outstretched before him. But he is not blind, for set in the palm of each hand is a staring eye!

Rokurō-kubi, a person whose neck can stretch for several yards and coil around things like a great snake, is scarcely more horrid than the *nuke-kubi*. By day an apparently normal human, it is capable of detaching its head while the body sleeps, leaving a smooth and bloodless stump. The head then rolls and bounces outside or flits through the air devouring insects. It is not above eating mortal guests who stay in its house. The only way to destroy a *nuke-kubi* is to move its sleeping body to

Colour woodcut taken from Hokusai's version of the Hundred Tales, c. 1837.

Yama-uba, mountain hag who devours babies.

Goblin-lantern of the Festival of the Dead.

Colour woodcut, from Hokusai's "100 Tales," c. 1837.

another place, as the head cannot then return to it and will perish.

Ikiryō are the ghosts of the living, for the soul of a deeply troubled person may leave its body temporarily to perform a mission of good or evil. *Shiniryō*, the ghosts of the dead, are perhaps potentially more dangerous than *ikiryo*, if indeed not more frightening. These are the souls who cannot cross the sea of the dead to reach the Meidō. Through some powerful tie of love, jealousy, sorrow, or thirst for revenge they are bound to restless existence in the night world of living men. The ghosts of the dead have no feet—their lower limbs trail off into a wisp of nothingness.

An incident reported in the Japanese newspapers at the time of preparations for the 1964 Tōkyō Olympiad is a fascinating survivor of the old beliefs and ways. During the building of an ultra-modern hotel designed especially to house foreign guests for the Olympics, several construction workers fell to the ground from high girders and were killed. One day a workman saw one of his companions get up and, as if he had been following someone, walk out and off the edge of the structure, plunging to his death. Then some of the men reported seeing a hand—nothing more, just a white hand extended in the old Japanese attitude of beckoning. It floated and waved out beyond the edge of the building, and those who saw it had to be forcibly restrained from following. This was too much for the men, who went on strike, refusing to go up on the "haunted" structure.

The ghost of Okiku—colour woodcut from Hokusai's "100 Tales," c. 1837.

Harried company officials discovered that the hotel was being built on the site of an ancient cemetery of the feudal lords. The ground had never been deconsecrated. Buddhist priests were brought in immediately to perform rites of exorcism on the site, after which the men willingly returned to their jobs. Never again during construction did they see the dreadful motioning of that pale hand of death.

There are many tales of goblin women who prey upon innocent persons. The *yama-uba* or mountain hag eats human babies. She has no mouth but devours her victims through a hole under her hair.

The cannibal woman of Adachigahara, sometime called *onibaba*, also fed on the blood of children. In old picture books she is sometimes shown about to cut open the stomach of a bound woman, in order to remove her unborn child. The *onibaba*'s house has a hidden room or a space under the floor-boards filled with the mouldering remains of scores of her victims.

Himeji Castle in its present form was built in 1609. From the grace and whiteness of its walls has come the name Shirasagi-Jo or White Heron Castle. Yet it too has its ghostly legend.

The lovely young Okiku was a lady in waiting at Himeji. She loved one of the young warriors quartered in the castle, but constantly spurned the attentions of another samurai who was deeply smitten by her beauty. His desire knew no limits, and he tried by every means to gain her heart, even to the point of using threats and cruelty. She steadfastly refused him.

Now it happened that Okiku was entrusted with the care of ten rare plates brought to the castle from Dutch traders at Nagasaki. Her would-be lover made off with one of these plates, thinking to frighten her into submission

Colour woodcut from Hokusai's "100 Tales," c. 1837.

A ghastly form peers over netting into a Japanese bed.

by telling the lord of the castle of her supposed carelessness. Distraught as she was, the young maiden still repelled his advances. Overcome with anger and frustration, he killed her with his sword and hurled her into a deep well.

Everyone assumed that the poor girl had run away, until one night soon after when a hollow, quavering voice was heard to issue from the depths of the well, counting; "*Ichi mai . . . , ni mai . . . , san mai . . . . .*" and so up to the number nine, ending in a wail of anguish. The spectral voice repeated this over and over, trying desperately to account for the missing plate.

A search of the well disclosed the pitifully battered corpse of the girl. Rites of exorcism were performed and a small temple dedicated to Okiku's restless soul was erected outside the castle grounds. Since her name means "Chrysanthemum" it was for many years considered unlucky to grow these flowers in the castle-town of Himeji.

The memorial temple still stands, and indeed many say that on a certain night each year, Okiku's sorrowful voice, ever searching, still issues from the depths of the well . . . . "*Ichi mai . . . . ni mai . . . . . .*"

The Japanese bed is completely portable, consisting of one or more thick quilts (*futon*) depending on the weather. These are placed directly on the flooring of resilient tatami mats. On summer nights when mosquitoes are abroad the *kaya*, a tent-like structure of fine

Himeji—the White Heron Castle—where the voice of Okiku may still be heard.

Raiko and the Earth-Spider—sketch by an anonymous artist, ink on paper, 19th century.

gauze netting, is arranged around the sleeping area on a light framework, or suspended from the wooden door-frames.

The full horror of this picture comes from the point of view of a sleeping Japanese—to wake in the middle of night and see by pale lantern-light a ghastly figure hovering over the *kaya*—the skeletal form of a long-dead corpse, still wearing around its bony neck the Buddhist rosary buried with it. It is a fiendish picture—the very substance of nightmare!

Any spider seen at night should be killed, for all that roam after dark are really goblins. They remain small and creep about until humans are fast asleep, and then grow to monstrous size!

These spiders in olden times had the power of wizards—able to conjure false images in men's minds. According to ancient accounts the 12th-century general Raikō was bewitched by a *tsuchigumo*, or earth-spider, which appeared in various guises, lastly as a seductively beautiful woman. As Raikō began to fall under her spell he felt himself enmeshed in sticky cobwebs, and summoning enough strength to break free, he cut at the woman, who ran off, changing into the form of a gigantic spider. Raikō followed a trail of body fluids oozed by the fearful creature, deep down into a cave in the earth, where he destroyed the beast after a fierce struggle.

Japanese cemeteries are invariably associated with Buddhist temples, as the Shinto faith abhors the presence of any dead thing within

Buddhist cemetery, where wooden markers bear prayers for the dead.

the sacred precincts of a shrine. Offerings are left before the gravestones, and wooden markers inscribed with prayers for the repose of the dead.

Yet in the gathering dusk few mortals dare to linger lest they see or perhaps be overtaken by the *hinotama*, an eerie phosphorescence which emanates from the earth to hover over the graves. Ghostly lights such as these are said to pass over the eaves of a house at the moment of an occupant's death. Here one might encounter the *hitotsume-kozō*, a spectral monk with one great staring eye in the centre of his face, or perhaps the pale wraith called *kubikajiri*, which dwells among the mossy stones and feeds on the heads of corpses. The very lanterns placed at gravesides during the feast of O-Bon sometimes become *chōchin-obake*, goblins of a most hideous aspect.

There was in feudal Japan a widespread custom of using *hito-bashira* (human pillars) in the foundations of any structure in which extreme construction difficulties presented themselves. This was sometimes a great honour for the family of the *hito-bashira*, who received a substantial income and much prestige, but perhaps less so for the unfortunate victim. His fate was to be buried alive under the building in order that his spirit might protect and strengthen it.

In the city of Kagoshima in Kyūshu there stands a stone memorial to the souls of a group of samurai, retainers of Lord Shimazu, who gave their lives to preserve the honour of their clan. Some three centuries ago, in order to keep

Anonymous sketch, ink on paper. School of Hokusai, first half of 19th century.

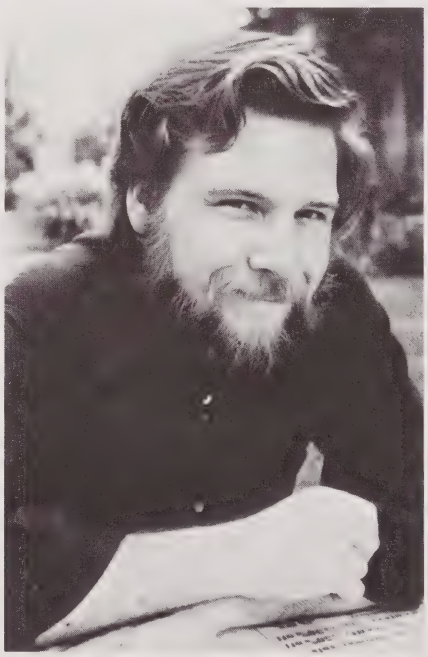
rebellion in the provinces at a minimum, the Tokugawa government ordered a number of provincial lords to contribute funds and labour towards the construction of retaining walls along a river in central Honshu. The Shimazu men worked long and hard on their part of the project, but flood waters continually tore their stone dykes apart. The cost of repairs threatened to exhaust the family treasuries. Then, a number of samurai volunteered to be buried under the foundations. To this day the wall stands—more modern dykes along the same river have crumbled and been swept away by raging torrents, but that guarded by the loyal men of Kyūshu remains steadily defiant.

Some three hundred feet above the city of Matsue on the hill of Oshiroyama broods the dark-walled keep of a true castle of the samurai. Matsue was the military capital of the ancient and sacred province of Izumo, and here in 1611 Horio Yoshiharu built his stronghold. It is said that a beautiful young maiden was buried as a *hito-bashira* when the castle foundations were laid. Not even her name has come down through the years—only the fact that she was a traditional dancer, and loved her art above all else.

Lord Yoshiharu was only newly in residence when he passed a law stating that thenceforth no young girl should be allowed to dance in the streets of the city, for whenever this happened the hill would tremble and the castle itself would shudder and shake from its stone base to the dragon-fish perched on its highest gables.

Ōmori Hikōshichi was a retainer of the powerful general Ashikaga Takauji. During the battle of Minatogawa in 1342, he encountered a beautiful woman richly dressed in the manner of the court. She begged him to carry her across a stream on his shoulders, a request which he took great pleasure in granting. Halfway across, his eye caught the lady's reflection in the water. He stopped in his tracks, drew his sword and killed her instantly. Where the pale and lovely face should have been he had seen reflected the countenance of a frightful demon.

David Pepper is a devoted student of Japanese art, arms and armour. He is also a devoté of ghost stories, and those he recounts here are illustrated from the collections of the ROM's Far Eastern Department. Mr. Pepper is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art, and an artist-craftsman with the Display Biology Department.



The Growing Collections

The Greek and Roman Department has enriched its collection of Greek pottery by the addition of two vases, an Attic amphora of black-figure style (972.182.2) and a South Italian jug with red-figure decoration (972.182.1). The completely preserved amphora, painted in a vigorous decorative style, shows a heraldic pair of roosters and lions respectively on the sides of the body, and a bearded male head in profile on each side of the neck. A graffito of two alphabetical signs is scratched on the underside of the body. An amphora in the Conservatori Museum in Rome (Inv. 15), in the same early style and with an identical decorative scheme, and obviously by the same hand as ours, has been attributed to the circle of the Athenian vase painter Lydos who lived and worked about the middle of the 6th century B.C. and whose style of painting can be recognized on a number of vases, some of them signed with his name.

The other vase, a plump Apulian wine jug of mid 4th century B.C. date, is decorated with a single male figure in reserved red on the black "glazed" body: he is an actor in the merry and irreverent comedy (*phlyakes*) which enjoyed great popularity in the Greek cities of Italy and Sicily during the 4th c. B.C. Wearing the typical costume of padded body tights, artificial phallos, short tunic and mask, the figure is a stock representation of a slave. Skilfully drawn with verve and character, he is shown slinking away throwing an anxious glance over his raised left shoulder. The vase, in an excellent state of preservation, is the only piece of Greek pottery in our collection depicting a theatrical scene and significantly enlarges our existing store of objects pertaining to ancient theatre.

A group of 22 pieces of Roman glass has been generously donated by Mrs. W. C. Van Horne of Montreal.

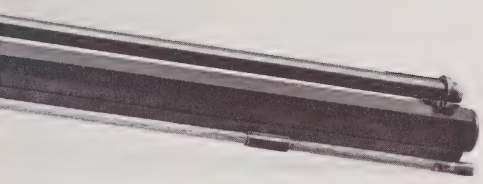
The ROM is famous for its collection of 18th century painted and resist-dyed cottons (chintz) made in India for the European market. During the past two months, several additions have been made to this collection, including a palampore with the arms of the Chien family, dating from the late 17th or early 18th centuries, an underskirt of the middle of the century, an overdress with a red ground of about 1770, and a pair of curtains and matching valance of applique work. The most stunning addition is a quilt (972.260) most generously given by Mrs. W. B. Harris. The centre is a palampore of the third quarter of the century, with borders added on three sides. The whole retains its glowing original colours.

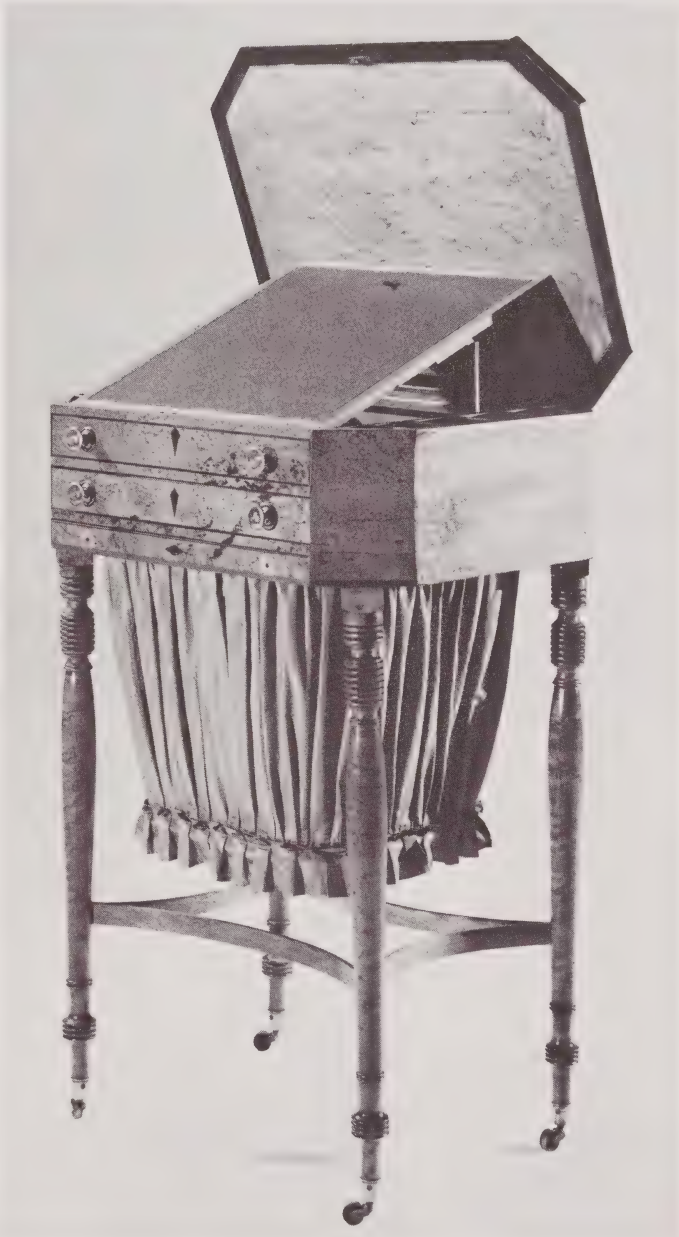
A donation from the Fashion Group Inc. (Toronto Regional Branch) has made possible two important additions to the costume collection. One is a rich silk tea-gown of about 1890 from the House of Worth. The other is this rare 18th century hooded cloak (972.311.1) of glazed woodblock printed cotton, in superb condition.

About 460 specimens have been registered into the Mineralogy collections since the last issue of ROTUNDA. These include several species new to the collections such as willemseite and nimite from the Republic of South Africa. A tiny but beautiful group of twinned epididymite crystals from St. Hilaire was donated by Mr. Quintin Wight, formerly of Chambly, Quebec. Mr. Neal Yedlin the famous micro-mineral collector donated 12 superb micromounts to our collection following his recent visit to Toronto.

Through the Purchase Trust Fund, the Museum has acquired a muzzle-loading percussion target rifle by William P. Marston, Toronto, *c.* 1860. The 43-calibre rifle, with lock-plate and barrel bearing Marston's marking, is equipped with a full length telescope sight marked M. James/Utica (New York). The lock and the hammer, the rear of the barrel, the patch box and the upper and lower extensions of the butt plate are all elaborately and finely engraved with floral motifs and hunting scenes. During his active period in Toronto (1851-1881) Marston was certainly Canada's best known and most prolific gun-maker, with a large shop on Yonge Street and six to ten employees. This target rifle is one of the Marston shop's finest pieces, and a rare example of the craft of early gun-making in Canada.

The Canadiana Department has recently added to the collection a particularly light and fine combination sewing/writing table (972.175). It is of birdseye maple with mahogany veneers, and bears the label (1813-1823) of Thomas Nisbet, St. John, New Brunswick, in the drawer. Labelled Canadian furniture is extremely rare; less than a dozen labelled Nisbet pieces are known. The table was acquired from the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum in Delaware, and is illustrated, as the sole Canadian piece, in Charles Montgomery's *American Furniture: The Federal Period.*





Until acquisition of the porcelain stem cup (972.240) decorated in overglaze enamels the Far Eastern Department had no example of this important category in Ming Dynasty porcelains. Overglaze enamels had been used late in the Sung Dynasty to decorate Tz'u-chou stoneware in North China, but it was not until the 15th century that these began to be used on porcelain at Ching-te-chen, the great ceramic centre of South China. Because of the great difference in firing temperature of lead silicate enamels and porcelain, the body and its transparent glaze had to be fired first and then refired at a much lower temperature after painting in enamels. Our stem cup is decorated in turquoise and yellow enamels with outlines and details in black. On the outside of the cup are two winged dragons pursuing flaming pearls among small clouds. On the stem are three *ling-chih* fungus, a symbol of immortality, and on the interior bottom is a winged fish. The gaiety and freedom of the design are characteristic of the 16th century and in sharp contrast to both the formality of 15th century decoration and the planned perfection of the early Ch'ing enamel painting.

Recent Publications

'KEEP ME WARM ONE NIGHT'
Early Handweaving in Eastern Canada
by H. B. Burnham and D. K. Burnham
University of Toronto Press, 416 pages, 760 illustrations, 4 colour plates; hard cover; $25 until Dec. 31, $27.50 thereafter.

'Keep Me Warm One Night' began in 1941, with the gift to the ROM of a single, handwoven, blue and white coverlet.

On the trail of other early handweaving, the authors travelled extensively through Eastern Canada, and to Great Britain and the United States, tracing its history, its tools and techniques, and even, where possible, the names of the weavers. Their book introduces the basic weaves—tabby, twill, and simple patterns—and the yarns—linen from flax, usually one of the first crops planted on cleared land; wool, once it was practicable to raise sheep; cotton, imported from the United States. There are even several examples incorporating cow hair, "poor man's wool."

Clothing, carpets, blankets and linens lead to coverlets, those colourful "kivers" that brightened the one-room cabin and graced the prosperous farmer's bedroom. Two-shaft, overshot, "summer and winter", multiple shaft, twill diaper and doublecloth eventually gave pride of place to the Jacquards, woven in many colours on a draw loom with the aid of pattern cards. Each coverlet, save the Jacquards, is accompanied by a pattern draft, the originals of which were once pinned to the weaver's loom. From them today's weaver may "tromp as writ" such delights as "Bachelor amonge the Girls", "Freemason's Felicity", "Turkey Tracks", "Churches and Chariot Wheels", and the Cape Breton pattern that gives the book its title.

This is a magnificent volume, which presents patterns and references for today's handweavers, new material for the collector and admirer of Canadiana, and a slightly different approach to our early cultural history.

O.G.K.

EXPLORING MINERALS AND CRYSTALS
by Robert I. Gait
McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd; 119 pages; illustrated, 38 colour plates; $7.95

"Minerals are the materials which form all rocks and hence the earth, and probably the universe itself." It is hardly surprising then that minerals should provide such widespread fascination. They are collected by children and adults for their often sublime beauty; studied by ardent laymen for their intricate structures; and form the subject of one of the great earth sciences, mineralogy, which among other things is also unlocking the secrets of the moon's structure.

Exploring Minerals and Crystals is a book for the enthusiast and for those who will pick it up and rapidly be converted, if for no other reason than that they will be seduced by the beautiful illustrations.

The author is Associate Curator of ROM's Department of Mineralogy. He happily combines scholarship with lucidity and leads the reader by stages through the properties and qualities of minerals to a high degree of understanding.

A.M.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LATIPINNATE AND LONGIPINNATE ICHTHYOSAURS; Life Sciences Occasional Paper 20; C. McGowan; 8 pages, illustrated; 75¢

DISTRIBUTION AND OVERWINTERING OF MYOTIS LEIBII AND EPTESICUS FUSCUS (CHIROPTERA: VESPERTILIONIDAE) IN ONTARIO; Life Sciences Occasional Paper 21; M. Brock Fenton; 8 pages, illustrated; 50¢

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE NEARCTIC AND NEOTROPICAL RIVER OTTERS (GENUS LUTRA, MUSTELIDAE, CARNIVORA); Life Sciences Contribution 80; C. G. van Zyll de Jong; 105 pages; illustrated; $5.00

THE EJACULATORY COMPLEX IN WATER MITES (ACARI: PARASITENGONA): MORPHOLOGY AND POTENTIAL VALUE FOR SYSTEMATICS; Life Sciences Contribution 81; David Barr; 90 pages, illustrated; $5.50

LATE PLEISTOCENE VERTEBRATES FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE PLAIN OF KOM OMBO, UPPER EGYPT; Life Sciences Contribution 82; C. S. Churcher; 172 pages, illustrated; $10.00

TERTIARY MAMMALS OF SASKATCHEWAN PART II: THE OLIGOCENE FAUNA, NON-UNGULATE ORDERS; Life Sciences Contribution 84; L. S. Russell; 98 pages, illustrated; $5.00

All publications listed above are available from the ROM or at the ROM Book and Gift Shop.

Gaily painted clay candelabra from Acatlán, Puebla. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Popular Art, México City.

COLLECTORS' GUIDE TO MEXICO

What to buy and where

by Helmuth Fuchs,
Associate Curator,
Department of Ethnology

Crossing the official language border at the Rio Grande is an exciting moment for the steadily increasing flow of vacationing Canadians. In México they are about to taste of a different cultural tradition, ranging from a glorious

Bull (page 41) and angel figurines of clay, glaze-dipped, from Atzompa, Oaxaca. Photos courtesy of the Museum of Popular Art, México City.

pre-Colombian past to the extraordinary amalgamation of the latter with Mediterranean styles of life.

The Mexican citizen, besides participating in all the technological development of the 20th century, is very proud of his own ethnic background, particularly the pre-Colombian past. Unless the Canadian understands and respects this pride, he will be dealt with by his Mexican hosts like any other visitor—a welcome source of incoming hard currency in exchange for excitement and pleasure. Such an attitude is unjust, and undesirable, to both the host and the visitor.

It was primarily growing respect for the pre-Colombian past, as perhaps the purest expression of independence, that determined the Mexican government more than a decade ago to build the National Museum of Anthropology, one of the great attractions of México City. Similar Museums of equally outstanding quality are now planned for the Provinces. This type of Museum is not a repository of exotic items unrelated to Mexican history. It is a shrine of nationality, documenting the past cultures and peoples whose mentality, achievements and emotions are very much alive in the present population. The National Museum of Anthropology differs radically from others of its kind all over the world. It is not History or Culture History of Any Mankind; it represents the integrity of a way of life among existing people, from a glorious past through tremendous hardship into a hopefully bright future.

The items in the showcases are by no means distant from the Mexican museum visitor. They all live somehow within him. The borders between the viewer and the viewed disappear. In many cases there is in fact no dividing glass partition. For the foreign visitor the absence of glass barriers, the undisturbed proximity to the object is particularly valuable—not in the sense that he may touch the object, but that the object may touch him.

Under the circumstances it is quite understandable that the Mexican government does not allow unauthorized exportation of documentation relevant to the history of the nation, particularly archaeological items. There will

always, of course, be persons on the visitors' side prepared to attempt to acquire such items, as there will always be a "host" prepared to provide the required material. Now, as the attempt to acquire archaeological items is contrary to the law, no guarantee of the authenticity of the item can be given by anyone, nor can any protection be provided or redress sought should the acquisition prove to be a fake. In either case the reputation of both the visitor and the host suffers, and the entire experience is most unpleasant for all parties.

The infinite difficulty of distinguishing an original from a fake, and the adamant attitude of the law to the export of original artifacts, can easily be avoided. The cultural heritage of the Mexican people manifests itself in its contemporary popular art, in objects which can be legally acquired and exported, and which constitute ideal souvenir items. What better memento that an item which represents the México you have visited! Wherever you go in México, there will be opportunities to purchase authentic items of popular Mexican art. The most important categories of popular art products, and their centres of manufacture, may be fouund in *Arte Popular Mexicano*, by Daniel F. Rubin de la Barbolla, and in *El Arte Popular de México* Special Number 1970-71 by Elektra y Tonatiuh Gutierrez. A sampling of de la Barbolla's excellent and explicit information follows.

In pottery, there are three groups: the Indian tradition, Indian-Mediterranean styles amalgamated, and majolica. Pottery of prevailingly Indian tradition is manufactured in places like Amatenango, Tepakán, Tikul, Coyotepec, San Marcos Tlapazola, Altapexi, Huaquechula, Ocotlán in Oaxaca and Ocotlán in Tlaxcala, Chiapantongo, Huatusco, Acatlán, Ameyaltepec, Zumpango, Huansito, and others. Pottery in which the Indian element has been amalgamated with Mediterranean styles is to be found in Atzompa, Puebla, San Marcos or San Mateo Acteopan, Tonala, Texmelucan, Metepec, Chignahuapan, Tecomatepec, Valle de Bravo, Zitácuaro, Capula, Acámbaro, San Miguel de Allende, San Luis de la Paz, Tzintzuntzan, Santa Fé de la Laguna, Pataamban, Zinapécuaro, Encarnación de Díaz, Valle de Atemajac, and elsewhere. Majolica is much rarer and on the way to disappearing. It is still manufactured in Chiapa de Corzo, Oaxaca, La Talavera Poblana, Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato, Venado and Aquascalientes, but disappeared not long ago in Sayula. In short, the great variety of forms, workmanship and style makes pottery a valuable item to be collected.

Textiles and basketry offer endless items of beautiful forms and colours, ranging from narrow bands to the elaborate dolls and animal figurines of Chicmecatitlán and nearby villages.

Figurines of polychrome clay from Tlaquepaque, Jalisco. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Popular Art, México City.

To discover all the varieties of textiles and basketry and select from them is left to the discriminating traveller.

Fine works of art in metal are also widely varied. Almost abandoned shortly after the Conquest, the limited production of gold and silver was regulated again in 1598. Since that time manufacture of religious and purely decorative objects in gold and silver increased until about 1850, after which it declined again, mainly because of the competition of cheap mass-produced articles. The centres of good silverwork—rings, earrings, necklaces and pendants, sometimes embellished by coloured glass to imitate precious stones—are Tlatlauhqui, Zacapoaxtla, Puebla, Oaxaca, Tehuantepec, Toluca, Pátzcuaro, México City, Querétaro, Zitácuaro, Celaya, Veracruz, Guanajuato, Léon and Guadalajara. Goldwork in traditional styles and of extraordinary quality is likely to be found in Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, Mérida, Valladolid, Campeche, Veracruz, Iguala, Papantla, Puebla, Atlixco, Morelia, Huetamo, San Luis Potosí and Guadalajara. Taxco and Mexico City offer also gold and silverwork of universal stylizations, as the example from the workshop of Walter Priebst in Taxco demonstrates.

An outgrowth of European influence, particularly that of Spain, is represented in the many items of copper, iron, tin, and lead. Excellent copper work can be found in Santa Clara in Michoacán, near the pre-Colombian copper mines of Hinguaran, and in México City, Puebla, Guadalajara, San Miguel Allende, Guanajuato and Taxco. Wrought iron is presently produced in México, Puebla, Oaxaca, Morelia, Guadalajara, Teocaltiche, León, and particularly—as the name indicates—in San Felipe de los Herreros (*herrero*—blacksmith). "Blue iron" (*hierro pavonado*) is produced in Amozoc and excellent knives are made in Oaxaca, México, Taxco, Morelia and Guadalajara. México City, Toluca, San Miguel Allende, Guanajuato, Taxco and Guadalajara are known for the quality of their tin products.

Leather work, formerly exclusively a popular art and home industry, is rapidly becoming integrated into market-oriented major industry. Products range from belts to wallets and luggage.

Chiapa de Corzo, Olinalá, México City, Quiroga, Pátzcuaro and Uruapan are the main centres of lacquer painting on wood, silver and pottery. Such lacquer painting is hard to find but still exists in declining form in Acapetlahuaya and Guerrero; it has apparently been abandoned in Puebla, Periban and Yucatán.

Glass manufacture, unknown on the pre-Colombian continent, appears to have been introduced to México about 1542. The first Mexican to produce glass was Camilo Avalos Razo, who learned the art from the French family named Quinar and established himself in Guatemala City about 1862, returning to Puebla two years later. At the beginning of this century members of the Avalos family established workshops in Jalapa, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, while members of another family, the Lemus, became famous at about the same time. Most of the artistic glass products

of today are in the so-called Lemus style. México City, Puebla, Texcoco, Jalapa, Guadalajara and Tlaquepaque are the most renowned glass centres of present day Mexico.

Paintings on cloth, copper, wood or tin may be found in many places. Feather mosaics and the so-called polychrome *popote* (straw)-painting which are survivals of pre-hispanic art still subsist in Puebla and México City, and deserve special attention.

Sculptures include the so-called "saints," crosses and masks. The best "saints" are made in San Isidro, Santiago, la Virgen del Rosario and San Antonio. Wooden masks, showing some Indian influence still, are made in Opopeo, Olinalá and the area of the Yaqui Indians.

Stone sculptures are manufactured in Oaxaca, Puebla, Tecali and Tehuacán, as well as in San Salvador el Seco. Animal figurines carved of fern-roots can be obtained throughout the Sierra de Puebla. In a place called Cañada (not Canada) near Qucrétaro, bread-tortillas are artistically painted. Similarly decorated fruits, cakes, sugar figurines, marmalade bars and pieces of chocolate are available in many areas.

Finally, there is an incredible variety of toys, miniatures and decorative objects. Toys are made of clay, wood, palm leaves, tin, paper, cloth, glass, leather, cardboard and papier maché. Clay whistles are made in Oaxaca, Puebla, Santa Cruz, Tonalá and Tlaquepaque; jingles of palm leaves are best represented in Chicmecatitlan; little wooden trays are made in Olinala and Quiroga; masks and dolls of cardboard or papier maché come from Celaya and miniature musical instruments from Paracho. Little figurines to decorate the Christmas creche are beautifully fashioned in Amozoc. Of wide distribution are figurines of obsidian, marble or opal, particularly those of Puebla, Tehuacán, Teotihuacán and Querétaro.

According to the religious calendar and individual anniversaries like birthdays, piñatas

Wire and paper rooster from México City. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Popular Art.

Buckle of gold with polychrome enamel inlay, from the Priebel Studio, Tasco, Guerrero.
Photo Leighton Warren, ROM.

decorated with paper in many colours and forms, flowers, saints and complete religious scenes, may be found. Mérida, Oaxaca, Puebla, Zacapoaxtla and Toluca are famous for their paper flowers. Throughout the Sierra de Puebla paintings on *amate* paper in the pre-Colombian tradition are still made. And the most beautiful filfot crosses, called *ojo-de-dios* or God's eye, are made by the Huichol Indians.

The vast possibilities and selection of popular art should make it clear that there is no need to risk purchasing a doubtful archaeological item as perhaps your sole and most inadequate souvenir of Mexico.

Should you insist on archaeological items, consider an authenticated replica. The National Institute of Anthropology and History has at the moment three outlets for replicas and also articles belong to Méxican popular art: The Ceramic Workshop (Taller de Cerámica) at the Museo del Carmen, Avenida Revolución 6, México City, The National Museum of Popular Arts and Industries (Museo Nacional de Artes e Industrias Populares) Avenida Juárez Nr. 44, Mexico City, and the Mecca of Méxican anthropology, the famous Museo Nacional de Antropologia, Paseo de la Reforma and Calzada M. Gandhi in México City. Catalogues of the available reproductions as well as some new creations in ancient styles can be obtained from each of the three above-mentioned outlets. The staff at all these places will be only too glad to advise and help you in getting the right souvenir, so that you will remember México as pleasantly as México will remember your visit.

Amate painting

Helmuth Fuchs, Associate Curator in the ROM's Department of Ethnology, has had wide experience of the countries of Central and South America. From 1957 to 1967 he was Chief, Department of Ethnology and Archaeology in the Museo de Ciencias Naturales in Caracas, Venezuela. Late last winter Dr. Fuchs conducted a 21-day tour of sites of historical and archaeological importance in Mexico, Chile, Peru and Colombia. His "Collectors' Guide to Mexico" contains words of wisdom for all travellers in the Latin American countries.

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